

REMARKS

Claims 9-27 are pending in the application. The Examiner objected to claims 12, 15 and 18 and rejected claims 9-11, 13, 14 and 16-27. The Examiner's stated objections to the drawings and specification have been addressed with appropriate amendments. With respect to claim 18, Applicant has revised claim 18 in a manner suggested by the Examiner to address the Examiner's objection to this claim. The Examiner's rejections are addressed below in substantially the same order as in the office action.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 USC § 102

The Examiner rejected Claims 9-11, 17-23 and 27 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Janes (US 4,651,100) and claims 22-24 and 26 as being anticipated by Sinclair (US 6,064,210).

Claims 9-11: Janes

With respect to claim 9, Janes does not teach or suggest a connector having a circumferential channel adapted to capture fluid. To Applicant's reading, Janes teaches a recess 69 that is described as adapted to receive an O-ring. Thus, the recess 69 cannot function as a space that captures fluid. To Applicant's reading, Janes has no teaching or suggestion to use a space, void or channel to capture fluid. Because Janes does not teach or suggest a recitation of claim 9, Janes does not anticipate or obviate claim 9 and claim 9 is in condition for allowance.

Claim 10 depends from claim 9, which Applicant believes is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicant believes that Claim 10 is in condition for allowance on at least those grounds.

Claim 11 has been cancelled.

Claim 17-23 and 27: Janes

With respect to claim 17, as discussed above with respect to claim 9, Janes does not teach or suggest a connector having a circumferential channel adapted to capture fluid. Because Janes does not teach or suggest a recitation of claim 17, claim 17 is in condition for allowance.

Claims 18-19, and 21 depend from claim 17, which Applicant believes is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicant believes that Claims 18-19 and 21 are in

condition for allowance on at least those grounds.

Claim 20 has been cancelled.

With respect to claim 22, as discussed above with respect to claim 9, Janes does not teach or suggest a connector having a circumferential channel adapted to capture fluid. Because Janes does not teach or suggest a recitation of claim 22, claim 22 is in condition for allowance.

Claim 27 depends from claim 22, which Applicant believes is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicant believes that Claim 27 is in condition for allowance on at least those grounds.

Claim 23 has been cancelled.

Claim 17-19 and 21: Thompson

With respect to claim 17, like Janes, Thompson does not teach or suggest a connector having a circumferential channel adapted to capture fluid. Because Thompson does not teach or suggest a recitation of claim 17, claim 17 is in condition for allowance.

Claims 18-19, and 21 depend from claim 17, which Applicant believes is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicant believes that Claims 18-19 and 21 are in condition for allowance on at least those grounds.

Claim 22-24 and 27: Sinclair

With respect to claim 22, like Janes, Sinclair does not teach or suggest a connector retained within a longitudinal passage of a housing and having a circumferential channel adapted to capture fluid. Moreover, Sinclair has no suggestion to use a channel to capture fluid. Because Sinclair does not teach or suggest a recitation of claim 9, claim 9 is in condition for allowance.

Claims 24 and 27 depend from claim 22, which Applicant believes is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicant believes that Claims 24 and 27 are in condition for allowance on at least those grounds.

Claim 23 has been cancelled.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 USC § 103

The Examiner rejected Claims 9, 10, 13, 14, 22, 24 and 25 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thompson et al. in view of Chesnutt et al. (US 5,661,402) and rejected claim 16 as being unpatentable over Thompson et al. in view of Chesnutt et al. as applied to claims 9 and 13 above, and further in view of Frey et al. (US 6,836,218).

Independent Claims 9 and 22

With respect to claims 9 and 22, as noted above, Thompson does not teach or suggest a connector having a circumferential channel adapted to capture fluid. Also as discussed above, Janes does not disclose such a channel. Moreover, to Applicant's reading neither Chestnutt et al nor Frey disclose such a feature. Because the prior art of record does not disclose or suggest a circumferential channel adapted to capture fluid as recited by claims 9 and 22, these claims are allowable and in condition for allowance.

Claims 10, 13, 14, 24 and 25

Claims 10 and 13 depend from independent claim 9 and claims 14, 24 and 25 depend from independent claim 22. For the reasons discussed above, Applicant believes that these independent claims are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 10, 13, 14, 24 and 25 are also in condition for allowance.

Claims 12 and 15: Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner stated that claims 12 and 15 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. These claims have been rewritten in independent form. However, in recasting these claims in independent form, Applicant has omitted certain recitations for the sake of clarity.

OBJECTIONS TO THE DRAWINGS

The Examiner objects to the drawings as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84 (p) (4) because reference character "58" has been used to designate both the snap ring and the direct contact electrode. Applicant respectfully submits that the proposed corrections and amendment to the specification removes the basis of the objection.

New Claims

Applicant has presented new claim 28 to further claim the present invention.

CONCLUSION

For all the foregoing reasons, Applicant submits that the application is in a condition for allowance. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. **02-0429 (584-35278-US)**.

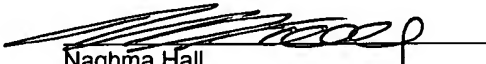
Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I do hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service on July 27, 2005 as First Class Mail, postage prepaid, in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop: Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450


Naghma Hall

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Please enter the replacement Sheets. Figure 4 has been amended to change numeral "58" to "59."



AMENDED DRAWING
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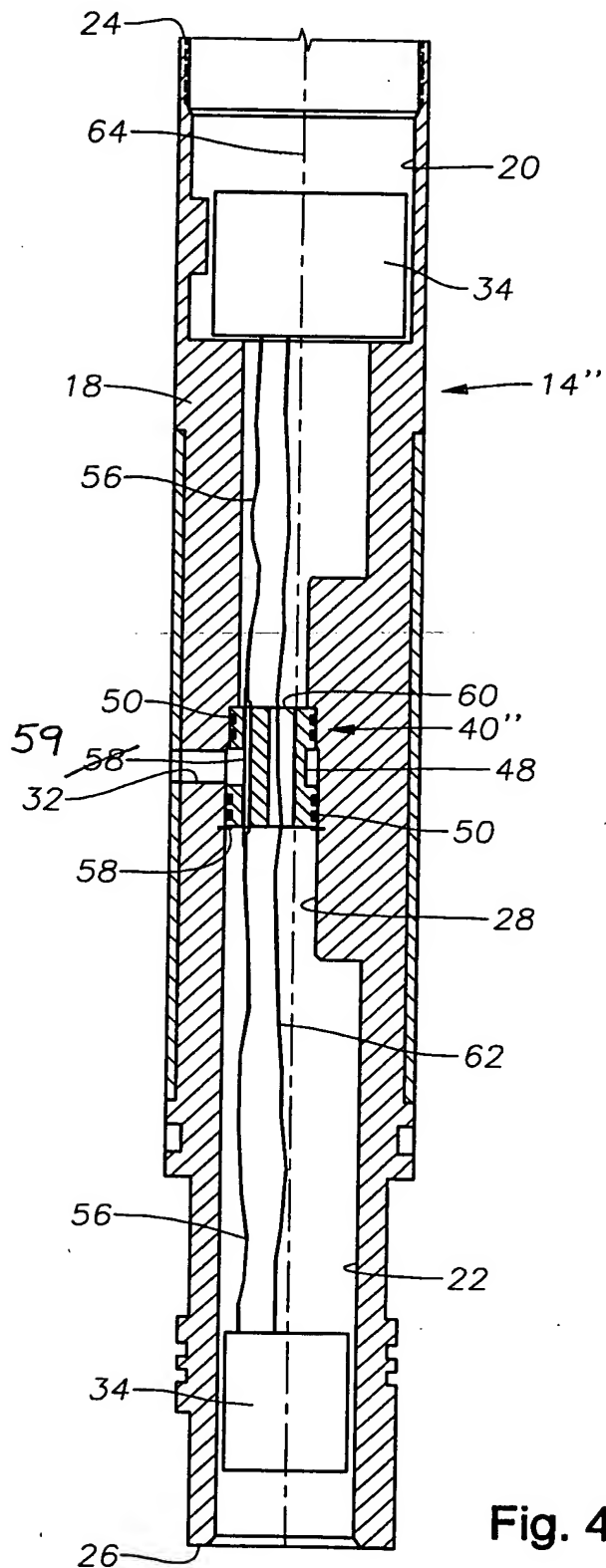


Fig. 4